

**Lesson Objective:** Comprehend the basic principles and theories underlying the international system, how they are changing, and the evolving nature of national security decision making.

**Desired Learning Outcomes:**

1. Describe the international environment and the US role in that environment based upon actors and processes.

Answer: The international environment is defined by two key concepts, “sovereignty” and “state.”

-**Sovereignty** is defined as supreme authority, a government, entity, or individual that has no higher authority that can order or control its political fate. Sovereignty is considered an attribute of states, and more precisely, the government’s of states.

-**State** is a legal and political term that refers to exclusive jurisdiction over a piece of territory. Occasionally the terms “nation” and “**nation-state**” are used synonymously with the term “state.” “**Nation**” is an anthropological term that refers to group loyalties (ie ethnic, common language, historical experience, religion...). “Nation-state” refers to an ideal condition whereby membership in a national group is also within the boundaries of the state.

-The principle of state sovereignty has stood at the base of international politics and is expressed as the right of each state to maintain total and absolute jurisdiction over its sovereign territory and those who live within that territory. Internally, sovereignty creates authority, and thus some semblance of physical order. The consequences for the international system are quite opposite. The same sovereignty that permits governments to govern within their own territory prevents it from imposing its rules on other governments, since they possess sovereignty over their own territory as well. The result is the absence of authority in the relations *between* states. **International politics is thus formally a state of anarchy, or the absence of government.**

-International politics are inherently “**power politics**” where states try to use their power to influence the behavior of other states but where they lack the authority to impose solutions in a legal sense. This is especially true when there is a conflict between the “**vital interests**” of states. In general, states will seldom yield to another state over their vital interests, even if those states are more powerful. States may even feel compelled or prefer to go to war on behalf of their vital interests.

-When vital interests and military action are involved, as they were in the Persian Gulf, foreign policy merges with **national security policy** (where national security is a subset of foreign policy and is defined in military terms).

-Several emerging conditions in the international environment are changing the way nations interact. These are: 1)Trans-state issues; problems that transcend state boundaries in ways over which states have little control and cannot be solved by individual state action alone. 2)The emergence of the global economy, a condition of international economic activity over which government’s of states have decreasing effective authority. 3)In some cases the rights of individuals and groups may transcend the sovereignty of states in situations of great atrocities (such as Rwanda, Somalia, and Bosnia).

-The first and perhaps the most important characteristic of the US foreign policy culture is the belief that the US is a **special state with a special destiny**. The second and closely related characteristic is the idea that the US is a **role model for the world... "the shining house on the hill."** The idea behind the assertion is that the American set of ideals is universal and should be emulated as a universal virtue. This created a crusading zeal, that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century came to be known as **"manifest destiny."** A historic and contradictory ideal was that of foreign policy driven by **isolationism (due to geography and the desire to be involved internationally economically but not politically so as to avoid the inevitable European wars)**. The US eventually learned that international economics and politics were inextricably related to one another and inevitably the US policy of isolationism drew us into the European wars that we sought to avoid. As the Cold War came to an end, the agenda of foreign policy has changed. Among the most prosperous countries of what we call the **First Tier (the most prosperous market-based democracies)**, **international economic concerns began to be prominent**. The creation of NAFTA and GATT are very visible examples of this change in international agenda. Along with economic issues other trans-state issues such as the environment, human rights, illegal drugs, and terrorism are being addressed. These changes to the international policy agenda have forced a change to the way US policy is created. Instead of foreign policy being the sole purview of the State Department, the US moved to an integrated executive group to create foreign policy by taking all aspects of the national interest and resources into account. Thus with the signing of the National Security Act of 1947 the **National Security Council (NSC) (which includes the Secretaries of State and Defense in addition to the President and Vice President)** was formed as the penultimate decision body for US foreign policy. The other key change to US foreign policy-making was the influences of global TV and increased activism by the public and the drive for more Congressional oversight of foreign policy issues to prevent Presidential missteps such as the Vietnam War, Bay of Pigs... Still the inherent US policy conflict between avoiding power politics via isolationism and yet imposing our idealism on the world (via grand crusades for human rights or against illegal drugs) is at the heart of the conflict between the two major factions of US policy; **idealists and realists**.

2. **Summarize the components of realism and idealism and how these approaches are challenged by change and continuity in the system.**

Answer: The two terms remain at the core of the debate on the proper US foreign policy, the substance of the debate surrounds the questions on the proper level of US involvement in the world; the US standing in the world; proper US priorities; US interests and responsibilities in the world; and the efficacy of US power.

**Realism:** To the realist, the basis of international relations in an anarchic, state-centered system is the exercise of power. States are the central actors, and they fail or succeed to the extent that they accumulate and exercise power (including military power) in their relations with other states. Basic to the realist paradigm is that states act out of concern for their vital interests, most basic of which are the maintenance of their power and sovereign authority, and that war is natural, even inevitable, consequence of an anarchic world. As the Cold War emerged, realism was clearly the

*deserve the  
peace by maintaining  
the balance of power.*

dominant position. The mind-set of realism is inherently conservative, prone to believing that, particularly in military matters, the clash of power meant one should err on the side of too much, rather than too little, military power.

**Idealism:** Argue that the principal dynamic is the existence of peace periodically interrupted by costly, unnecessary, and avoidable wars. They generally view the recourse of war as a defect in the system, the causes of which should be alleviated. Idealists are dedicated to making the world a more peaceful place by reducing or eliminating the recourse of states to war by structural reform, including the collective use of force against those states that threaten to or actually breached the peace. Idealism was partially blamed for the spiral into WWII. E.H. Carr claims that the idealists sent the world into a downward spiral of political events because they concentrated on the way that they thought the world ought to be, rather than the way the world really was thereby missing the central dynamics that led once again to war.

*- optimistic  
- neglect the  
of power*

3. Evaluate the seismic changes that have taken place in the global community since 1989 to include the tier system.

Answer: As part of President Gorbachev's Perestroika (restructuring; primarily for economic reforms designed to remove impediments to productivity) for the Soviet Union, the Soviets needed to get out from under the drain on the economy that subsidizing Eastern European Communist States represented. Gorbachev informed the leaders of the Warsaw Pact countries that it was time to make peace with their own people because Red Army tanks would no longer be available to protect them. The breakup of the communist world started with the election of a non-communist prime minister in Poland in Aug 89, followed closely by the peaceful protest of Soviet rule in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. The action continued at a frenzied pace with Hungary's Communist Party voting itself out of existence in Oct 89 and then the monumental occasion of the fall of the East German government and the opening/dismantling of the Berlin Wall on 9 Nov 89. The communist dominos continued to fall, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Romania, and culminating with Albania (the last communist state in Eastern Europe) in 1993. Meanwhile on July 1, 1991 the Warsaw Pact members dissolved the alliance and the Soviets began negotiating the removal of forces from the territories of the former Warsaw Pact members. Driven by a growing movement in the Soviet Baltic States to succeed from the Soviet Union, a group of hard-lined communist leader attempted a coup to wrest power from Gorbachev and turn back to the familiar, hard-lined, oppressive communist tactics. The coup was a comedy of errors that clearly displayed the ineptitude of those leaders of the CPSU. In the midst of the confusion, the Soviet Union itself began to unravel. On 20 Aug 91 Estonia declared its independence followed the next day by Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Moldavia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizia, and Tajikistan. In the chaos grew a plan for confederation of the former Soviet states to become the Commonwealth of Independent States. On 8 Dec 91, the Russian, Ukrainian, and Byelorussian leaders declared that the Soviet Union had ceased to exist. On 31 Dec 91, the flag of the Soviet Union flew for the last time over the Kremlin, replaced the next day by the flag of Russia.

More than the destruction of the socialist bloc, the events of 1989 to 1991 also produced the effective discrediting of the idea underlying them, Marxism as modified by Lenin and codified by Stalin. The socialism at the heart of Marxist economics turned out to be an uncompetitive philosophy in the 1980s and one now being rapidly abandoned by peoples around the world. The authoritarian rule perfected by Stalin turned out to be necessary to enforce socialism, but it failed to convert citizenries to its political or economic credo because, as Joshua Muravchik argued in a 1990 *New Republic* article, "The problem is not, as some claim, that the two concepts, democracy and socialism, are intrinsically incompatible. The problem is that where the people are sovereign, they never choose socialism...they never opt against economic freedom, that is capitalism." Democratic socialism, in other words, doesn't work.

The resulting impact to the international environment was to bring a new outlook for the future with a curious void of definitive enemies for the US. No longer a clear focus to US foreign policy. Likewise, there was confusion on how to incorporate the new states into the Western economic environment. There have been various arrangements made to provide a path for the former communist states to be adopted into the NATO and European Community on a gradual basis to build confidence in their economic and political stability. The problems for Russia (still the largest (physical area) country in the world) are both economical (conversion to a market economy without a central bank) and ethnic and are not expected to be solved easily nor in the foreseeable future.

### **Tier System**

Based on a 1950s French economist's description of different groups of states by dividing them into worlds or tiers. Originally, the First World consisted of the most advanced states of the world---industrial democracies. A Second World included the socialist or communist states and a Third World made up of the emerging countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The disappearance of many of the communist countries, made the classification scheme obsolete, thus giving birth to the two tier system.

The First Tier is the leading market-based democracies (North America, The European Economic Area (EU and EFTA), Japan, and the Antipodes (Australia and New Zealand), also referred to as the "circle of market democracies" by President Clinton. The first tier is representative of countries that have entered the Third Industrial Revolution (the information-based revolution in computing and telecommunications), are producers rather than consumers of high technology, and have increasingly intertwined economies and convergent political philosophies. They are also key to the involving regionalization of trade through bodies such as the G-7 Summit, EU, NAFTA, and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC).

The rest of the world makes up the Second Tier. The Second Tier is a very diverse array from the near-first tier states (ie South Korea and Taiwan) to the extremely poor states that are concentrated in Africa and parts of southern Asia. See chart on page 66 for summary of second tier subtiers defined (developed, partially developed, developable, and resource rich countries). The nature of power within and between the tiers has changed, generally speaking military power is of less importance, especially among the First Tier states. The absence of prospects for a system-threatening war has caused military reductions throughout the first tier states and forced a debate over how many and what kinds of US military forces should be retained in the future. Since most of the violence in the international environment is almost

exclusively in the poorer parts of the second tier (which lacks the resources necessary to deal with the problems), what interests do the First Tier states have in becoming involved or regulating the problems/violence in the second tier states? How the First Tier states deal with this challenge to policy requires the US to adopt a leadership position and help answer this troubling foreign policy issue.

4. Illustrate how “global community” poses challenges to democratization and greater civic action.

Answer: Refer to pages 97-100. The author makes claims that even with the impressive advances of globalization in so many areas there is still a lot of work to be done to truly improve or further spread and advance democracy throughout the world.

- Still have human rights problems
- Multiple party systems doesn't force everyone to participate
- Second Tier doesn't have/get all the democratic breaks.

**Questions for Study and Discussion:**

**1. In a changing world how effective is US power now?**

Answer: My assumption from the readings is that US power is changing significantly. Less important is our military strength and more important is our economic strength and our leadership in the definition of an emerging, highly interdependent, global union of states. How we embrace the second tier states and address their vital interests as well as our own will define the level of violent conflicts that may emerge on the local and international scene.

**What interests are more or less vital?**

Answer: As we become more globally-linked to the world, our national security interests become increasingly blurred by the vital interests of our global, socio-economic partner states. Global markets and trade transcend the traditional national boundaries. Environmental and human rights issues are no longer the sole vision of the enlightened US that must be subjugated due political (to get a regime to work with us against communism) or military concerns (to allow or support regimes in order to gain a military strategic position against our enemies), but will play a more dominant role in US and world foreign policy.

**2. What is realism?**

This lesson has no shortage of definitions for this term. See DLO #2. Also, see page 38.

**Utopianism?**

Is essentially the same as idealism (see DLO#2). See page 37; "The most fundamental assumption was that there was a natural harmony of interests among nations. All shared a common interest in peace. Any nation that disturbed the peace was irrational and immoral. Such a nation was also undemocratic: a free a peaceful population would not choose was...It was an extremely optimistic view."

**Behaviorism?**

See page 39. Political scientist rejected realism and utopianism and observed the many forms of state behavior to draw their conclusions. They looked for patterns of behavior such as: When one of the victors of a war perceives that its interests aren't met in the post-war conference, conflict will result in war. Likewise for the loser.

**Are these terms still relevant to US international security discussions?**

I think they are and you can clearly see the factions in on the US political scene that are espousing their version of realism, idealism, and behaviorism.

**3. What is the world of tiers?**

See the second part of DLO #3.

**How does "tier" explain the increase in limited conflict?**

Explained in part in DLO #3, for further info see page 70 and 71 about the scarce resources of the second tier states and the instability of the economic and socio-political environment.

**4. Does globalization make war less likely?**

It is hard to say. War is related to a state's vital interests and whether or not globalization can lead to satisfy those needs or make them worse, depends a lot on the leadership and vision of the most strongest players.

• Tend towards 2<sup>nd</sup> Tier fighting

**Does it make the state obsolete?**

I don't think it will make the state obsolete in the near term, since there still must be an organization of the collective voice of a people, by which their vital interest can be met. Without the creation and maintenance of states, the will of unique groups will not be heard and violence will result.

**What challenges to civic activism and increased democracy are posed by globalization?**

Although there has been increased global activism and our technology continues to bring the world a little closer, the author of the last article argues that we still have a very long way to go to get to the largest part of the world population. For democracy to thrive it must have the foundations from which to grow and globalization doesn't ensure this.

Power moving away from the people (increase of power by PACs...)  
Global communication helping